

ART. IX.—*Proceedings of the Asiatic Society.*

(Wednesday Evening, the 2nd October, 1839.)

The Right Rev. the LORD BISHOP of Calcutta, Vice-President, in the chair.

The Proceedings of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

Captain J. W. BIRCH was proposed by Dr. O'SHAUGHNESSY, seconded by the chairman.

Mr. E. K. HUME was proposed by Mr. STOCQUELER, seconded by the officiating Secretary.

Read a letter from the Secretary of the Royal Institution of Great Britain, acknowledging the receipt of copies of the Journal of the Asiatic Society.

Read a letter from Messrs. W. H. ALLEN and Co., Book Agents of the Society in London, forwarding account sales of the Transactions and Oriental publications, together with a statement of books supplied by them to the Society, exhibiting a balance of 16*l.* 12*s.* 2*d.* in their favor.*Library.*

Read a letter from J. VAUGHAN, Esq. Librarian, American Philosophical Society, forwarding the following books for presentation to the Society :—

Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, vol. 6th, part 2nd., New Series.

Memoir of Dr. P. S. PHYSICK, by J. RANDOLPH, 1 vol.

Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Medical Statistics from 1821 to 1830, by G. EMERON, Esq.

Read a letter from Mr. J. AVDALL, forwarding for presentation a copy of an Armenian and French Grammar.

Read a letter from H. T. PRINSEP, Esq. Secretary to the Government of India, forwarding 50 copies of the Rev. W. TAYLOR's examination and analysis of Colonel MACKENZIE's Manuscripts.

The following Books were presented :—

Bulletin de la Société Géographique, vol. 10—*by the Society.*Proceedings of the Geological Society, Nos. 60 and 61, with a list of its Members—*by the Society.*Proceedings of the Committee of Commerce and Agriculture of the Royal Asiatic Society—*by the Society.*Transactions of the Society of Arts, &c. vol 52, part 1st.—*by the Society.*Crisp's observations on the abolition of the Impress System in two letters, addressed to J. W. COOPER, Esq.—*by the Author.*

Ditto, Treatise on Marine Architecture.

Notice Historique sur la vie et les Voyages de René Caillie, par M. Jomard, Paris, 1839.

L'Inde Française ou collection de dessins Lithographiés, représentant les Divinités, &c. &c. des peuples Hindoues qui habitent les possessions Françaises de l'Inde, et en général la Cote de Coromandel et de Malabar, par M. J. J. Chabrelie, avec un texte explicatif, par E. Burnouf et E. Jacquet. Paris, 1827 et 1835. Tome 1st and 2nd, folio, 2 copies—*from the Government of India.*

Recherches sur les Ossemens Fossiles, par G. Cuvier, 4th edition Paris, 1834 à 1837, 8vo.

Atlas, a ditto ditto, en Livraisons.

Le Regné Animal distribué d' après son Organisation, par G. Cuvier, Paris, 1835, Liv. 49 Molusques, 10mo. Liv.

Compendium Logicæ—presented by the *Bishop of Isauropolis*.

The following books were received from the Booksellers:—

Royle's Illustrations of Botany, part 10th.

Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia; History of England.

Alif Leila, 5 copies—*subscribed for by the Society*.

The Officiating Secretary laid before the Meeting the Second Part of the 19th vol. of the Transactions of the Society.

Mr. BOUCHEZ, the assistant Librarian of the Asiatic Society, submitted to the Meeting a Manuscript Catalogue of the Society's books, with a request that it be printed.

Resolved—That the Catalogue be referred to the Committee of Papers.

SHAH KABEER UDDEEN laid before the Meeting a Manuscript copy of the *Zeech Bahadur Khanee*, with a request that the Society would join him in paying half the expense of its printing, on the same footing as it has done towards the printing of the *Sharya ul Islam*.

Resolved—That a Committee be formed consisting of Mr. H. T. PRINSEP, Mr. J. C. C. SUTHERLAND, Mr. JOHN CURNIN, Mr. JAMES MIDDLETON, and the Rev. H. PRATT, to report as to the merits of the work.

Museum.—Note by Dr. M'Clelland:—

“Skeletons, presented by the King of Oude, of an Elephant, of a Camel, and of a Tiger. The first has been indifferently prepared and worse treated, the cartilages and apophyses are detached, the former as well as some of the caudal vertebræ, and the last range of tarsal and carpal phalanges are altogether wanting.

The Camel, otherwise a valuable addition to our Museum, wants the entire caudal vertebræ, together with two pieces of the sternum, anterior part of the jaws, and corresponding teeth, together with some of the tarsal and carpal phalanges, cartilages of the ribs, &c.

The Tiger wants two caudal vertebræ, a femur, and twenty-two phalanges of the tarsus and carpus.

Skeleton and skin of a Kangaroo prepared from a specimen presented by Mr. H. T. PRINSEP.

The skin of a Boa, twenty feet long, presented by Ensign R. W. BIRD, 4th Regt. N. I. with the following note from the Hon. Mr. WILLIAM WILBERFORCE BIRD.

‘I have the pleasure to forward the skin of a Boa, which I have been requested to present on the part of Ensign ROBERT WILBERFORCE BIRD, of the 4th Regt. N. I. for the Museum of the Asiatic Society.

When the Boa was shot, it measured 21 feet, in length. It had swallowed a spotted Deer, which was taken out of the inside, not too much decomposed for the spots in the skin to be quite distinct. Where the Deer was, the skin measured three feet one inch across.

(Signed) W. W. BIRD.’

An adult specimen of *Artonyx* from Assam where they are common, presented by Captain JENKINS, and the more valuable as that in the Museum appears to be a young ungrown animal."

Oriental Publications, Antiquities, &c.

Read a letter from J. MUIR, Esq. recommending to the Society to procure a copy of the *Pseudo-Vedas*, composed by the Romish Missionaries on the Coromandel Coast.

Seharunpoor, August 13th, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,—I last year wrote to Mr. PRINSEP and the Rev. Professor MALAN, former Secretaries to the Asiatic Society on the subject of the *Pseudo-Vedas*, composed by the Romish Missionaries on the Coromandel Coast, in the hope that steps might be taken by the Asiatic Society to procure from Madras or elsewhere a manuscript copy of the work, for their own library. I now take the liberty of addressing you on the same subject, and of offering the sum of 25 Rupees towards the purchase or transcription of the manuscript, if the Asiatic Society of Bengal see fit to adopt any measures for this purpose.

The Society has already admitted into the 14th volume of its Researches a Dissertation on the subject of these *Pseudo-Vedas*, and the literary interest attaching to them, is, I think, sufficient to justify this application to the Society, to take steps for rendering them accessible to its members. It seems, at the same time, to be desirable that the reasonings of the Romish Missionaries on the subject of their discussions with learned Hindoos should be brought within the reach, and made available for the use of those who are labouring to promote the same cause at the present day.

I remain, My dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

J. C. C. SUTHERLAND, Esq. }
Secy. As. Soc. Bengal, &c. &c. }

J. MUIR.

Resolved—That the Secretary be requested to address the Rev. DR. WILSON of Bombay, soliciting his aid in obtaining a copy of the work.

Read a letter from L. WILKINSON, Esq. urging the printing of the *Siddhants*.

To W. B. O'SHAUGHNESSY, Esq.

Officiating Secretary to the Asiatic Society, Calcutta.

SIR,—I have the pleasure to forward to you by Dawk Bhanghy four copies of a very admirable little disquisition on Caste, by a learned *Boodhist* of olden times, who exposes the weakness of the arguments on which the institution rests, in a most irresistible manner. I beg you will be so good as to present one copy in my name to the Society, and accept another for yourself.

The other two I beg you will present to any gentlemen most interested in exposing the evils of the institution. They will no where find arguments of a like cogency to a native's apprehension. They will do well therefore in studying the work.

I shall be very much obliged to you if you will let me know what your Society thought of my proposition for printing the *Siddhants*, the *Gruhan Laghuvu* with *Mullaris Teeka*, and the *Rekhu Gunit*. Since I wrote to you I have been favoured by some friend unknown to me, with a copy of the *Beeja Gunit* or *Algebra* of *Bhascur Acharyu* printed at Calcutta, thus only three instead of four works remain to be printed. I lately submitted a proposal to Government and also to the Agra School Book Society to the like effect, as I did through you to the Asiatic

Society. The Agra School Book Society are most anxious to get these works printed, and Lord AUCKLAND I understand received the proposal favourably. By all parties agreeing to take a certain number of copies, the share of the expense on each will be too trifling to deserve consideration.

Believe me, My dear Sir,
To be yours very faithfully,

L. WILKINSON.

Resolved—That the subject be referred to the Committee of Papers.

Read an application from NEEMCHAUND SHEEROMONEE, demanding remuneration for correcting the proofs of the *Mahabharata*.

Resolved—That the application be referred to the Committee of Papers.

Physical.

Read a letter from MESSRS. FRASER, MACDONALD and Co. forwarding a claim of Mr. W. SCOTT of Singapore, for Co's. Rs. 240-3-9 for expenses incurred by him in keeping the register of the tides of that place.

Resolved—That the Society recognize and discharge this claim in question.

Read the following letter from Mr. SCONCE regarding some Geological specimens forwarded to the Society.

MY DEAR SUTHERLAND,

I am despatching to you some things that look like Geological specimens, and from the circumstances under which they were found, what I infer to be relics of some of the ancient epochs which mark a Geologist's History of the world. The largest and most important—if it be real—of the specimens, seems to be the remains of an animal of the turtle kind; though in a much larger scale than the modern turtles or tortoises. The size however will not disprove identity, if there be other marks sufficient to guide the judgment of one acquainted with Natural History. I knowing nothing of such matters, am merely led by the appearances which the specimen exhibits of animal conformation—the shape and relative position of the parts, and the peculiar marks of some of the parts are such, as not I think, to be inanimate concretions accidentally formed in a sand hill. The specimen was broken before I discovered it—and I sent my gardener with insufficient instructions to dig out the remainder. He brought me consequently a heap of fragments, and what I send you are such parts as I could put together. I have packed the pieces in such a manner that you will be able, I dare say to trace the form they assume. When put together, they form two distinct portions, and of these I shall enclose pencil sketches that may help you to "pick up the pieces." I send also several unconnected bits of the same specimen; in one of these you will detect distinct traces of a claw—and in another what looks like a paw in relief. In this latter you will observe corroborative evidence of animal existence in the evident delineation of five fingers or toes, and also marks of spurs or nails. I send also in another box an *entire* fragment—that is, a portion just as it lay in the hill. My idea of the specimen is that it exhibits the external form of the animal, and the fossilization as we now see it, was effected during, or in consequence of, animal decomposition. I cannot detect how far the hardened mass may be a type of the—so to call it—turtle shell. The last specimen I have mentioned will shew you that the fossil was, as it were, a case or mould—enclosing fine white sand. Externally it was included in a stratified deep brown sand hill, to the depth of forty or fifty feet below the surface.

I also send a piece of charred wood, I found it in a position which makes me attach to it some importance. I discovered it in a bed of firm blue clay beneath successive strata of sand and clay, and some twelve or fourteen feet from the surface. The site externally is a swelling hillock. But the most extraordinary circumstance attending this specimen is, that while it was imbedded in and beneath strata that must have been deposited while the surface was exposed to repeated inundations, if not uninterruptedly overflowed, there are what I take to be undoubted marks of heat and fusion—not merely in the wood being charred—but in a *fused crust* an inch or two above where the wood lay. This crust generally speaking is not the thickness of two rupees: but is spread as regularly as any of the layers of clay and sand. I observed however that it seemed to *run* as fused matter generally does, making its way into crevices, and gathering into a mass. But what satisfies me more strongly of the fused origin of this crust, is that just above the charred wood—an inch or two,—it appears to have *trickled* in a state of fusion *through* the clay, making a hole for itself scarcely a quarter of an inch wide. I send specimens of the clay, the crust, and of that portion of the clay, through which the fusion ran. I suppose that the heat from the fused liquid above was sufficient to char the wood. Willing to send you the specimen as entire as possible, I have not scraped it or cleared it so as to ascertain the appearances of the wood.

There are also some smaller specimens of what I suppose to be quondam shell-fish. One I am told is a muscle—if a shell, it is at all events a bivalve: the two shells separate—and the one is flossy looking. These shells I found also in a strata of clay and sand more or less hard—and it seems odd, that when broken, they emit a strong *sulphureous* smell. I am too ignorant on such subjects to know whether these things have any value; you will judge when you see them, and if worth while, I should be glad, if you offered them to the Society.

I am

Yours very sincerely,

A. SCONCE.

Before the Meeting broke up Dr. O'SHAUGHNESSY, exhibited several Photogenic drawings prepared by himself, and in which a solution of gold was the agent employed. A more detailed notice of the experiments described will appear in a subsequent number.

[We cannot dismiss the subject of the Proceedings of the October Meeting, without adverting to their having been distinguished by the first exhibition in the Society's apartments of Colonel M'LEOD's, magnificent model of the Nizamut Palace of Moorshedabad. We strongly recommend all those who can value a first rate practical lesson in classical architecture to visit this triumph of taste and skill. Aided by the "Report by the Surveying Committee," published in our last number, the visitor can acquire by an hour's study more correct ideas on some of the noblest features of the Orders observed in this structure, than he could derive by any amount of study, from books or plates, or could gain without great difficulty, even from the building itself.—EDS.]